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THE PRINCESS ATHURA: A Romance of Iran. By Samuel W. Odell.
New York: Thos. Y. Crowell & Co.

Mr. Odell finds a suggestion for a romantic story in the Empire founded by Cyrus the Great after his conquest of Media, Persia, Lydia, and Babylonia, and in the political events of the seven years following his death in 529 B.C.,—viz., the troubled reign of Cambyses III; the Conquest of Egypt; the revolt of the false Bardya; the overthrow of both Bardya and Cambyses and the final succession of Darius I, son of Hystaspes, to the Empire as "King of the World". But he has not made the best use of the materials at hand, and his romance falls far below the average of historical novels. The love-story of Darius (called in the story the "Prince of Iran") and the Princess Athura, is somewhat attenuated. Among the *dramatis personæ* is the Prophet Daniel, who is made to appear on the scene eighty years subsequent to his departure as a captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. It is therefore no special wonder that he should appear less impressive at that age than at the time when he was able to survive a night spent in a den of lions; or when he appeared before Belshazzar and read the handwriting on the wall. Clearly it is not to be expected that a novel, even though it be called a historical novel, should be historically accurate; and the history of that period is so complicated that it is difficult to check up the historical part of the story and verify it. It may not be the fault of the story if it fails in that particular. But the inaccuracy of the archæological setting of the story does not detract from the literary merits of the book. And the men and women who are described—their dress, manner and customs, and the furniture of their homes—are evidently derived, not from a study of Asia in the sixth century before the Christian era, but from England and France in the Middle Ages. For example, the description of Bardya, just returned from a gallop on horseback across the country, listening to the words of the Prince of Iran while "nervously slapping his riding whip against his boots" (p. 212), or that of Cambyses on a hunting trip "looking right royal in his close-fitting tunic, his leather riding breeches, red shoes, and round felt cap in which were stuck several black eagle feathers" (p. 117), are

scenes more fitting for England in the time of the Charleses; and the minute description of the library and furniture of the palace of the King of Iran would serve as well for a château of France in the time of Louis XIV. A. H. N.

BEHIND THE DARK PINES. By Martha Young. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

BYPATHS IN DIXIE. By Sarah Johnson Cocke. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

THE UNMANNERLY TIGER AND OTHER KOREAN TALES; and THE FIRE-FLY'S LOVERS AND OTHER FAIRY TALES OF OLD JAPAN. By William Elliott Griffis. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.

These four volumes form an exceedingly interesting group of folk-tales, two of them dealing with the animal stories of the Southern negro made familiar by Joel Chandler Harris, and two containing stories from the far East,—Korea and Japan. Both Miss Young and Mrs. Cocke, though following in the footsteps of Harris, are in no sense mere imitators, and each in an individual way has contributed her share towards perpetuating the memory of one noble figure in Southern life before the civil war,—the black Mammy. Surely in a niche of fame side by side with Uncle Remus the Southern Mammy deserves a conspicuous and honored place. In an introduction to Mrs. Cocke's book, Mr. Harry Stillwell Edwards justly praises her for her picture of the "wise-old Mammy",—that loved and dreaded dictator of our fathers and mothers,—but he goes too far in attributing to Mrs. Cocke pioneer work in this field and in declaring that hitherto "the very heart-center of Southern civilization had not been touched". Mr. Harris himself introduced the Mammy into his tales, and Mrs. Pynelle has furnished one of the finest portraits of the type in her delightful little volume, *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot*, a book to which Mrs. Cocke would be prompt in paying tribute.

In Miss Young's book Mammy keeps herself discreetly in the background, as do the children to whom she tells the tales. We learn to know Mammy only through the stories themselves and through the brief, crisp moral, which is no essential part of the folk-tale itself, but which grew naturally out of